

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 3826

LISBON FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE VISIT: THROUGH THE GLASS DARKLY,
A LOOK AHEAD AT THE SPANISH ELECTIONS

REF: MADRID 3635

1. EVERYONE AGREES THAT SUAREZ' ELECTORAL VEHICLE (THE CENTRO DEMOCRATICO) WILL TURN OUT TO BE THE LEADING COALITION IN THE FORTHCOMING ELECTION FOR THE SPANISH PARLIAMENT (CORTES), PERHAPS WINDING UP WITH ABOUT 40PERCENT--ESTIMATES OF THE PLURALITY VARY--IN THE MOST IMPORTANT LOWER HOUSE RACE. BEYOND THAT, IT IS TOO EARLY TO TALK WITH ANY CERTAINTY EVEN OF THE ORDER OF FINISHES. THE COUNTRY HAS NOT VOTED IN 40 YEARS, MOST POLLS ARE FRAGMENTARY AND THE CAMPAIGN HAS REALLY JUST STARTED. THE POLLS DO COINCIDE IN SUGGESTING THAT ABOUT 40PERCENT OF THE SPANISH ELECTORATE HAVE NOT YET MADE UP THEIR MINDS, OTHERWISE MANY OF THE PUBLIC POLLS TEND TO SUPPORT THE FORTUNES OF THE POLITICAL GROUPS THAT COMMISSIONED THEM.

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2. WE SPOKE TWO DAYS AGO WITH THE GOVT'S CHIEF POLL TAKER, A REPUTABLE SOCIAL SCIENTIST WHO GAVE US HIS VIEWS QTE OFF THE RECORD UNQTE, MEANING HE DID NOT WANT OUR DISCUSSION DISCLOSED TO OTHER GOS OFFICIALS.

3. HE TOOK A PROPERLY CAUTIOUS VIEW OF POLLING RESULTS NOTING THAT THE GOS'S OWN PRIVATE POLLS, WERE SO FAR

ONLY RELIABLE FOR CERTAIN GROSS TENDENCIES, I.E.:

--40 PERCENT UNDECIDED

--30 PERCENT CENTRISTS

--15 PERCENT LEFTISTS OF ONE VARIETY OR ANOTHER

--15 PERCENT CONSERVATIVE OR RIGHTIST

4. BY EXTRAPOLATION HE JUDGED THAT MUCH OF THE 40 PERCENT UNDECIDED WOULD FALL IN THE CENTRIST CAMP, AND OF THOSE CENTRIST VOTES MOST WOULD GO TO THE SUAREZ COALITION, BECAUSE OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S POPULARITY AND AN INCLINATION TO STICK WITH THE POWER (I.E. THE GOS). ALMOST ALL OF THE CONSERVATIVES VOTE WOULD GO TO THE FRAGA-LED ALIANZA POPULAR, WITH THE EXTREME RIGHT GETTING ALMOST NOTHING. MOST OF THE LEFTIST VOTE WOULD GO TO THE SOCIALISTS (PSOE) OF FELIPE GONZALEZ, WITH THE COMMUNISTS NOT GETTING MUCH AND ASSORTED OTHER LEFTIST GROUPS EVEN LESS. JUST AS A GUESS, BECAUSE THEIR PROVINCE-BY PROVINCE PRIVATE POLL RESULTS WILL NOT BE ON HAND FOR ANOTHER TWO WEEKS HE GAVE HIS TENTATIVE THOUGHTS ON LOWER HOUSE VOTE RANGES:

--THE SUAREZ-LED CENTRO DEMOCRATICO-40PERCENT OR A LITTLE MORE, WITH A SLIGHT ADDITIONAL PLUS IN SEATS

--BECAUSE OF THE PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SYSTEM USED.

--THE ALIANZA POPULAR - 15 - 20 PERCENT

--THE SOCIALISTS - 12 - 18 PERCENT

-- THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS - 5 - 8 PERCENT

-- THE COMMUNISTS PCE - 5 PERCENT

-- REGIONAL PARTIES AND MINOR GROUPS - 5 - 8 PERCENT

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5. HIS VIEW CORRESPONDS PRETTY MUCH WITH OUR OWN TENTATIVE GUESSTIMATE SENT IN ADVANCE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S VISIT TO MADRID (REFTEL). BUT THE DIFFERENCES WERE INTERESTING, WE HAD THOUGHT THE COMMUNISTS TO BE A BIT HIGHER THAN HIS VERY LOW 5 PERCENT, BUT HE INSISTED THAT ONE COULD INFER NO MORE FROM THE BACKGROUND DATA. HE THOUGHT SUAREZ WOULD TAKE AWAY POTENTIAL CLIENTELE FROM THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND THEY WOULD SUFFER BADLY FROM NOT HAVING JOINED THE SUAREZ COALITION. THE SOCIALISTS, HE SAID, WITH THEIR LEADER GONZALEZ BECOMING SOMETHING OF A STAR, MIGHT DO A BIT BETTER THAN HIS ESTIMATE. STABLER

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